

The Decatur Daily

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FORECAST

TODAY FRI SAT
72°/64° 65°/43° 56°/42°
Complete forecast, A2

ENTERTAINMENT



Local kids to debut in 'Willy Wonka Jr.'

When the Princess Theatre curtain rises on "Willy Wonka Jr." — Dream Weavers Children's Theatre's second production since forming in August — 105 children, ages 5-18, will take the stage. For half of them, the shows Friday, Saturday and Sunday will mark their acting debuts. **D1**

See this weekend's top events in the area

On tap: Disney's "High School Musical" at Hartselle High School, The Birthday Party Variety Show at Somerville Playhouse, Limestone County's Home and Garden Show, and more. **D1**

NATION

Porn star who alleged Trump affair to tell story

Stormy Daniels, the porn star whom Donald Trump's attorney acknowledges paying \$130,000 just before Election Day, believes she is now free to discuss an alleged sexual encounter with the now president. **A3**

THIRD THURSDAY



Teens, adults enjoy a shining night out

Created by the Tim Tebow Foundation, A Night to Shine prom gave teenagers and adults with special needs a night to remember at Central Baptist Church in Decatur last week. **C6**

AREA DEATHS

Richard Allcorn, Moulton
Billy Barkley, Decatur
Ruth Ann Burt, Decatur
Boyd Butler, Hartselle
Minnie Chatman, Tennessee
Kathleen Curbow, Decatur
Katie Hovis, Athens
Charles Jackson, Decatur
Ronnie Overton, Moulton
Annette Riggs, Hartselle
Luther Smith, Athens
Edward Sandlin, Athens
Richard Workman, North Carolina
Death notices, obits, **A4**

Abby D5
Business C5
Classified B4
Comics D4
Crossword D5
Editorials A5
Entertainment D1

Decatur, Alabama
106th year, No. 355
24 pages, 4 sections



CAPITAL MURDER TRIAL

Mitchell convicted of lesser charge



Cortez Mitchell is escorted from the Morgan County Courthouse on Wednesday after being found guilty of two counts of felony murder and four counts of first-degree robbery, six class-A felonies. [JOHN GODBEY/DECATUR DAILY]

Defendant found guilty of felony murder, robbery; victim's family satisfied with verdict

By Marian Accardi
Staff Writer

Family members of Joshua Davis, one of the two men killed during a May 2015 crime spree in Decatur, said they're satisfied with a jury's decision in the capital murder trial of Cortez Mitchell.

On Wednesday morning, Mitchell was found guilty of two counts of felony murder

and four counts of first-degree robbery, all class-A felonies, after a trial that lasted more a week. He had been charged with the more serious capital murder.

"We're here for justice," said Angela Davis, Davis' step-mother, who wore a shirt showing Davis' face and "Justice for Joshua" printed across it. "That's all we wanted." She and Davis' father, Perry, then

left the courtroom.

"I thought we would get a favorable verdict," Mitchell defense attorney Joe Propst said, "and, under the circumstances, I think it was a favorable verdict. I think justice was served today." Propst was referring to a conviction on felony murder as opposed to capital murder.

SEE MITCHELL, A6

SCHOOL SHOOTING

17 dead in Fla. school shooting

Former student suspected of attack had at least one rifle and multiple magazines

By Terry Spencer and Kelli Kennedy
The Associated Press

PARKLAND, Fla. — A former student opened fire at a Florida high school Wednesday as classes were being dismissed, killing at least 17 people and sending scores of students running into the streets to escape the bullets.

Frantic parents rushed to Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, where SWAT team members and ambulances had

surrounded the campus. Live footage showed emergency workers who appeared to be treating the wounded on sidewalks.

"It is a horrific situation," Superintendent Robert Runcie said. "It is a horrible day for us."

The 19-year-old suspect was taken into custody without incident about an hour after he left the school, authorities said.

Broward County Sheriff Scott Israel said the suspect, who was previously expelled for disciplinary reasons, had at least one rifle and multiple magazines. Most of the fatalities were inside the building, though some were found fatally shot outside, the sheriff said.

The gunman was identified as Nikolas Cruz by a U.S. official

Inside

Decatur couple's grandchildren OK, A3

briefed on the investigation. The official spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to discuss the information publicly.

The day started normally at the school, which had a morning fire drill, and students were in class around 2:30 p.m. when another alarm sounded.

Noah Parness, a 17-year-old junior, said he and the other students calmly went outside to their fire-drill areas when he suddenly heard popping sounds.

SEE SHOOTING, A3

SOUTHEAST DECATUR

2nd Publix opens to excitement

By Bayne Hughes
Staff Writer

With the opening of the Publix on Alabama 67, The Glens at Burningtree resident Carolyn Haraway expects to buy fresh produce and meats daily.

"I can just run across the street and buy what I need each day," Haraway said.

Publix opened Wednesday morning to much anticipation as a possible growth catalyst in the Indian Hills-Burningtree area of Southeast Decatur. The 45,900-square-foot grocery store is the anchor of Thomasville, Georgia-based Teramore Development's 16.9-acre commercial development that will feature a 62,813-square-foot building with space for up to six retail stores and three outparcels.

Point Mallard Centre is expected to create a new pot of tax revenue for Decatur. The city estimated initially that the development has the potential for \$45 million in revenues over five years, creating \$1.5 million to \$2 million in annual sales tax revenue.

Rain lessened the morning crowd, but the parking lot was full by lunch as shoppers streamed in and out of the store.

Store officials were expecting a heavy rush-hour crowd as customers came from all across the area.

"I had a meeting at Burningtree (Country Club), and I really wanted to see the new store, too," said Becky Esposito, of Trinity. "It's a beautiful store. The aisles are open and wide, and I was impressed with the number of employees working."

SEE PUBLIX, A6

SENIOR AIDE RESIGNS

Trump condemns violence

President breaks his silence, says allegations should be addressed

By Deb Riechmann and Zeke Miller
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Breaking his silence about abuse, President Donald Trump said Wednesday he's "totally opposed to domestic violence." He commented amid growing pressure to speak out after allegations that a top White House aide had abused two former wives.

"Everybody knows" his position, Trump said, but "now you hear it."

The president's remarks came more than a week after the allegations against former White House staff secretary Rob Porter first became public. Porter resigned a week ago. He has denied the allegations.

Trump had praised Porter, his former staff secretary, on Friday in his first comments about the allegations.

SEE VIOLENCE, A6



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